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LETTER DATED 27 MARCH 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
ITALY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The humanitarian situation in Albania continues to deteriorate. In particular, there are increasing concerns over the delivery of aid to the civilian population. Stocks of food, medicine and medical supplies have been badly depleted. This is clearly a situation that requires prompt action by the international community.

The statement by the President of the Security Council of 13 March 1997 has encouraged States Members of the United Nations and international organizations to help with the provision of humanitarian assistance to Albania.

Today, the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) adopted a decision in which it, having taken note of the official appeal for assistance by the Albanian authorities to a group of countries, appreciates that certain participating States are willing to meet the official request, and expects any assistance to be given in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and OSCE principles, as well as with appropriate action by the Security Council.

This decision establishes the conditions for launching a prompt, important and complex effort to assist Albania in this difficult phase. Procrastination or delay of this action could have very grave consequences for the people of Albania. Humanitarian action cannot effectively take place without the existence of adequate security conditions.

In this regard, Italy has taken the initiative of promoting the creation of a multinational protection force, which will operate with full respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the OSCE and which, to ensure security and freedom of movement of its personnel, will act under Chapter VII of the Charter. To this end, the Government of Italy has consulted with a number of Governments, in particular the Government of Albania.

The objective of the force will be to help create a safe and secure environment for the action of international organizations to provide support in areas of international assistance. The force will also ensure the protection

and safety of international personnel operating in Albania. The concept of operations for the force will reflect these objectives, in particular the need to ensure early protection of ports, the Tirana airport and the main lines of communication, as well as stocks of humanitarian aid.

In this respect, a legal framework for the provision of this assistance should be envisaged. This framework should, in our view, take the form of a resolution by the Security Council authorizing Member States who are willing to participate in such a multinational force to conduct the operation to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

The Government of Italy is prepared to work without delay with other Governments to enable the deployment of a temporary humanitarian operation for Albania. Italy would also be ready to take the lead in organizing and commanding such an operation.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) F. Paolo FULCI
Ambassador
